

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) Filter aid which comprises finely divided wood particles which have been subjected to a chemical liquid treatment, ~~and washing and drying~~, that removes sensorially active substances therefrom, and washing and drying, wherein the particles are subjected to a treatment with a dilute alkali solution at a temperature below 100°C and at atmospheric pressure, to a degree sufficient to remove the sensorially active substances from the wood particles and leave the wood particles as wood particles.
2. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood particles comprise wood fibers.
3. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood particles comprise wood comminution residues.
4. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood essentially comprises only wood particles of one and the same type, size distribution and pretreatment.
5. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood comprises at least two fractions of particles comminuted by different processes.
6. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood comprises at least two fractions of wood particles comminuted to different dimensions.
7. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood comprises fractions of wood particles produced from at least two different starting materials.

8. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the filter aid comprises other organic or inorganic fractions which do not affect the filtration properties.

9. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the filter aid comprises at least one other filter-active fraction.

10. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the filter aid comprises other mineral fractions.

11. (Previously Amended) Filter aid according to claim 9, wherein the at least one other filter-active fraction comprises kieselguhr.

12. (Previously Amended) Filter aid according to claim 9, wherein the at least one other filter active fraction comprises perlite.

13. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein a mean particle dimension of the filter aid is below 3.0 mm.

14. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 2, wherein a mean fiber diameter of the wood fibers is below 1.0 mm.

15. (Withdrawn) Process for producing the filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the particles are digested with the dilute alkali solution during a period of action.

16. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the temperature of the dilute alkali solution during the treatment is in the range of room temperature.

17. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the temperature of the dilute alkali solution during treatment is 50-100°C.

18. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the temperature of the dilute alkali solution during the treatment is from 70 to 90°C.

19. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein concentration of the dilute alkali solution is from 2 to 10% by weight, based on the solids content.

20. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the alkali solution used is sodium hydroxide solution.

21. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the period of action is of a duration such that at most 10% by weight on an absolutely dry basis of the wood constituents are removed.

22. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the period of action is from 5 to 120 min.

23. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the consistency during the treatment is from 5 to 25%.

24. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the particles are washed and dried after the period of action.

25. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the particle size during the treatment is up to 10 mm, preferably from 0.1 to 1.0 mm.

26. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the water value is set by influencing the grinding in the wet phase (refiner).

27. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the particles are further comminuted after the treatment and before the drying, simultaneously with the drying or after the drying.

28. (Withdrawn) Process according to claim 15, wherein the particles are classified after the treatment and the drying.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Withdrawn) The use of finely divided wood particles which have been treated according to claim 15 as filter aid.

31-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) Filter aid for use in forming a prefloat filter layer for filtration of liquids comprising finely divided wood particles which have been subjected to a chemical liquid treatment, ~~and washing, neutralizing, and drying,~~ that removes sensorially active substances therefrom, and washing, neutralizing, and drying, wherein the wood particles are subjected to a treatment with a dilute alkali solution at a temperature below 100 °C and at atmospheric pressure, to a degree sufficient to remove the sensorially active substances from the wood particles and leave the wood particles as wood particles.

37. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 36, wherein a mean particle dimension is below 3.0 mm.

38. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein a lignin content in the wood particles after the treatment, is substantially unchanged with respect to the lignin content in the wood particles before the treatment.

39. (Previously Presented) Filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the wood particles after the treatment remain as loose wood particles with a wood character.

40. (Previously Amended) A filter aid, for use as a beverage filtering prefloat filter layer, comprising:

finely divided lignin-containing wood particles treated with a dilute alkali solution at a temperature below 100°C and at atmospheric pressure, to a degree:

a) sufficient to remove the sensorially active substances from the wood particles,

b) insufficient to quantitatively extract lignin from the wood particles, and to

c) leave the wood particles as loose wood particles with a wood character adapted to filter a beverage in the beverage filtering prefloat filter layer.

41. (Previously Amended) A filter aid comprising:

finely divided wood particles which have been subjected to a chemical liquid treatment that removes sensorially active substances therefrom, wherein the wood particles are subjected to a treatment with a dilute alkali solution at a temperature below 100°C and at atmospheric pressure, to a degree

a) sufficient to remove the sensorially active substances from the wood particles,

b) insufficient to quantitatively extract lignin from the wood particles and to

c) leave the wood particles as wood particles,

wherein the finely divided wood particles have a moisture content of less than 10% by weight.

42. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the dry finely divided wood particles have a moisture content of less than 10% by weight.

43. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood particles have a neutral to acid pH.

44. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood particles are subjected to neutralization after being subjected to the treatment with the dilute alkali.

45. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 1, wherein the finely divided wood particles have a water value ranging from 1010 to 1125.

46. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 36, wherein the dry finely divided wood particles have a moisture content of less than 10% by weight.

47. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 36, wherein the finely divided wood particles have a water value ranging from 1010 to 1125.

48. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 40, wherein the wood particles are subject to drying after being subjected to the treatment with the dilute alkali.

49. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 48, wherein the dry wood particles have a moisture content of less than 10% by weight.

50. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 40, wherein the wood particles have a neutral to acid pH.

51. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 40, wherein the finely divided wood particles are subjected to neutralization after being subjected to the treatment with the dilute alkali.

52. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 51, wherein the finely divided wood particles are dried after being subjected to the treatment with the dilute alkali.

53. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 40, wherein the finely divided wood particles have a water value ranging from 1010 to 1125.

54. (Previously Added) A filter aid according to claim 41, wherein the finely divided wood particles have a water value ranging from 1010 to 1125.

55. (Previously Added) A filter aid arrangement comprising:
a beverage; and, in contact therewith,
a filter aid for filtering the beverage, comprising finely divided wood particles
which have been subjected to a chemical liquid treatment that removes sensorially
active substances therefrom, wherein the particles are subjected to a treatment with a
dilute alkali solution at a temperature below 100°C and at atmospheric pressure, to a
degree sufficient to remove the sensorially active substances from the wood particles
and leave the wood particles as wood particles.